

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-referenced application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-24 remain pending in this application. The claims have been amended herein to recite more clearly an apparatus and method for a telephone answering device ("TAD") that allows a voice message to be secured within a single mailbox so that it can be accessed only by a user authorized to play back the particular voice message.

Claims 1, 2, 7 and 9

In the Office Action, claims 1, 2, 7 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Ali *et al.*, U.S. Patent No. 6,335,962 ("Ali"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

This application claims priority from the patent application for Ali since Syed Ali is one of the named inventors in both applications. Ali therefore is not prior art. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-7 and 9-24

In the Office Action, claims 1-7 and 9-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nabkel, U.S. Patent No. 5,963,626 ("Nabkel"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 1-7 and 9-24, as amended, claim a method and apparatus for a TAD that allows securing a voice message within a single mailbox so that it can be accessed only by a user authorized to play back the particular voice message. Nabkel fails to disclose these elements of the claims.

Nabkel appears to disclose a method and system for generating and posting a message to callers based on a caller's identity. A communication station determines whether a calling party is attempting to connect with a subscriber to the system. An adjunct processor determines the calling party's identity based on the calling party's calling number and optional personal identification number. An intelligent peripheral unit generates a voice or textual

message for receipt by the calling party based on the identity of the calling party according to instructions provided by the adjunct processor.

In Nabkel, the system is implemented using a network or on or adjunct to a communication station. Col. 4, lines 55-60. Outgoing messages are generated by subscribers to the system. Thus, Nabkel does not disclose or suggest a TAD, as claimed by claims 1-7 and 9-24. Moreover, in Nabkel, it is the subscriber that generates an outgoing message that may be accessed by an authorized caller to the system. Nabkel therefore fails to disclose or suggest a TAD where a party calling the TAD secures access to voice messages by the TAD's user on a voice-message by voice-message basis, as claimed.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claims 1-7 and 9-24 are patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 8

In the Office Action, claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nabkel in view of Harrington, U.S. Patent No. 5,745,559 ("Harrington"). The Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 8 is dependent on claim 1 and is patentable over Nabkel for the same reason that claim 1 is patentable – Nabkel fails to disclose or suggest a TAD that allows a person calling the TAD to secure voice messages for access only by a user of the TAD authorized to play back the particular voice messages. Harrington fails to remedy these deficiencies.

Harrington appears to disclose a method and apparatus for interconnecting a message system and a private branch exchange that provides entirely digital voice transmissions, high bandwidth, and redundant transmission of control information between the messaging system and the PBX. Harrington fails to disclose or suggest a TAD that allows a calling party to secure a voice message within a single mailbox for access by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as claimed by claim 8. As the Examiner acknowledges, Nabkel fails to teach the additional limitation of claim 8 that the voice message includes a header, and the header information includes the security parameters.

The Examiner states that Harrington teaches that message headers information includes the calling party's identification, time of the call and other information. The Examiner alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine Harrington with Nabkel so that the header information of a voice message would include the security status. Nonetheless, even if Harrington and Nabkel are properly combinable (which they are not), the combination would still fail to disclose or suggest a TAD that allows a calling party to secure a voice message within a single mailbox for access by a user authorized to play back the voice message, as claimed by claim 8.

For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 8 is patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the foregoing rejection be withdrawn.

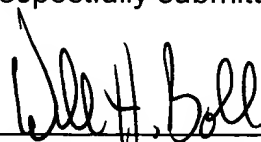
Claim of Priority

This application claims priority from the application for Ali, which was filed on May 27, 1998. The Applicants request that the Examiner recognize this claim of priority.

Conclusion

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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